

18 is not a Magic Number



Overview

DCS Office of Independent Living

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- The purpose of the DCS Office of Independent Living is to assist youth in making a successful transition from foster care to adulthood.
- DCS offers supports and services for youth transitioning out of care and those who are likely to remain in care to help them become successful adults.
- Regional Independent Living Specialists provide training and technical assistance to regional staff.

Current Core IL Services

- Independent Living Planning for all youth 14-16
- Transition Planning for all young people 17+
- Scholarships (ETV & State-Funded Scholarship)
- IL Wrap funding (graduation, extracurricular and other expenses)
- Independent Living Allowance (ILA)
- Life Skills Instruction
- Leadership Opportunities

Training Overview: Changes to Post-Custody Services

- Tennessee has opted into the Federal Fostering Connections Act of 2008.
- This Act allows our state to extend foster care services to 21.
- DCS has updated policies to extend foster care services to 21.
- This training will provide an overview of those changes.

Learning Objectives

This training should help you understand:

1. Why Tennessee is extending Foster Care Services to 21
2. Who is eligible for Extension of Foster Care Services
3. What is available under Extension of Foster Care Services
4. Where to find more information and support
5. How we will measure success

18 is Not a Magic Number

Think about your own transition to adulthood — what age were you when you were truly “independent?”



What do you think the
average age of
independence
is in the US?

27

Parents generally continue to support their own children long past age 18

- Approximately 50% of young adults age 18-24 live with their parents at some point.
- About 40% of 2008 college graduates still live with their parents.
- Sixty percent of parents provide financial support to their adult children who are no longer in school.

(Source: Forbes, 2011)

Better Outcomes for Youth Who Accept Foster Care Services up to 21

- More than doubles the chances a youth will be working or in school at age 19
- Young women who remained in care saw a 38% reduction in pregnancy before 20
- Youth were twice as likely to have completed some post-secondary education

Youth who Age Out of Foster Care

Youth who cannot access foster care beyond age 18 have significantly higher rates of:

- Incarceration
- Homelessness
- School dropout
- Unemployment
- Unplanned pregnancy
- Being Uninsured

Why Implement Extension of Foster Care Services to 21?

- Draw down additional federal funds so we can broaden the array of services for young adults
- Engage youth as partners and resources
- Improve graduation rates
- Increase educational attainment
- Decrease negative outcomes
- Build forever families for youth

Implementing Change: Extension of Foster Care Services to 21



New Name for “Post-Custody Services”

Hi my name is



**Extension of
Foster Care
Services**

What will change with new policy?

1. Who DCS can serve (slightly expanding population)
2. How Extension of Foster Care Services are funded (Federal IV-E funding)
3. What services young adults 18-21 get (now also includes placement support, monthly case mgmt, judicial oversight)

Who we can serve 18-21

Youth who turned 18 in Foster Care
(not a YDC)

AND

Who meet 1 of the 3 following criteria:

Who DCS Can Serve 18-21

1. Young adults completing high school or GED
2. Young adults enrolled in an institution which provides post-secondary or vocational education
3. Young adults who have a serious physical/ mental health condition that prevents them from pursuing education or full-time employment

Who DCS Can Serve 18-21

- This is VOLUNTARY. Young adults are not in “custody.”
- Young adults can leave and return up to age 21 to access services.

How is this funded?

Federal IV-E Funding:

- If a youth was eligible as a custodial youth and transitions directly to Extension of Foster Care, no additional steps are needed for IV-E.
- If a youth was not IV-E eligible as a custodial youth OR if more than 6 months passes between a youth's exit and return to DCS, DCS will need:
 - New Title IV-E Foster Care eligibility determination
 - Court order determining extension of foster care services is in the young person's best interest

What are the services under “Extension of Foster Care Services?”

(The services a youth receives will depend on what they qualify for & need)

- Educational and Training Vouchers (ETV) and State-Funded Scholarships
- IL Wrap Services (graduation fees, extracurricular activities, etc.)
- Life Skills Instruction
- Leadership Training

What are the services under “Extension of Foster Care Services?”

- Monthly face to face with FSW
- Court oversight every 6 months
 - One Review includes Annual Transition Plan Review (to demonstrate reasonable efforts)
- Housing Support (such as a placement agreed upon by the young adult and team or the Independent Living Allowance)

Who qualifies for what services?

For 18-21 year olds accepting
Extension of Foster Care Services

1) 18-21 Completing High School/GED :

Young adults completing High School or their GED may also qualify for:

- Placement support with Resource Family OR Independent Living Allowance
- IL Wrap and other IL supports (graduation expenses, extracurricular activities, etc.)

2) 18-21 Enrolled in Post-Secondary

Young adults 18-21 enrolled in an approved post-secondary or vocational education institution may also qualify for:

- Educational and Training Voucher (ETV)
- Placement support with Resource family OR Independent Living Allowance
- VERY LIMITED IL Wrap **for youth getting ETV** (Things not associated with Federal definition of “cost of attendance”)

3) 18-21 “Can’t work/attend school”

Young adults up to age 21 who have a serious physical/mental health condition that prevents them from pursuing education or full-time employment may also qualify for:

- Placement support with Resource Family OR Independent Living Allowance
- IL Wrap and other IL supports
- Purpose is to bridge to services for adults
- DCS staff will follow current policy to bridge youth to adult services through DMH and DIDDs
- Regional Well-Being clinical staff, RA & IL Director must approve

Youth Requirements

- Work toward goals in Transition Plan
- Live by rules and laws of society
- Maintain contact with Family Service Worker
- Maintain eligibility (i.e., academic eligibility)
- Work with staff and team to identify a place to live that is safe and supports completion of Transition Plan goals
- Reapply for TennCare

Other IL Services for Youth 18-21

Young people who are not eligible for DCS Extension of Foster Care Services (or who don't choose services through DCS) may be eligible for:

- Services through Youth Villages' Transitional Living Program
- Jim Casey Initiative Resource Centers (where available)
- Adult services that can help them achieve their goals (career centers, Human Services, etc.)

What about IL Services for Custodial Youth?

- Independent Living Services for Custodial youth will stay the same
- IL Life Skills Instruction
- IL Wrap (graduation expenses, extracurricular fees, etc.)
- IL Planning for 14-16 year olds
- Transition Planning for youth 17+

Tools and Resources



IL Resources

- **IL Specialists**
- DCS Policy 16.51-16.53
- IL Manual
- IL Guide
- IL and Transition Planning Guides (3)
- IL Tipsheets
- Online training
- IL Section of DCS Website

New Policies: 16.51-16.53

- 16.51: Independent Living and Transition Planning
- 16.52: Extension or Re-establishment of Foster Care for Young Adults
- 16.53: Eligibility for Independent Living Services

What will success look like?



Measures of Success

- Percentage of youth who age out and accept Extension of Foster Care Services
- Transitional Surveys completed on time
- Life Skills Assessments are completed on time
- Number of youth achieving educational goals
- Permanency for older youth
- Quality of IL and Transition Planning and Casework as evidenced by File Reviews

When will this begin?

**Target
Implementation
Date:**

July 1, 2012



Review of Learning Objectives

1. Why TN is extending foster care services to 21
2. Who is eligible for Extension of Foster Care Services
3. What is available under Extension of Foster Care Services
4. Where to find more information and support
5. How we will measure success



Youth Voice

“We need a safe program where youth are challenged to step up and take their future into their hands, but also with assurance that there will be adults cheering them on and making themselves available to help when needed.

Really, we just need the same thing other young adults need.”

— Eddy, 20